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Women in Municipal Government

Survey Summary

October 1st, 2008



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Women in Municipal Government
Survey Summary

Executive Summary

The AUMA Women in Municipal Government Committee surveyed a group of elected female municipal Mayors and Councilors, each with their own diverse background.

The survey examined the history of women's participation, current motivation and future prospects.



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Reasons cited to participate in municipal governance

- Tended to express an interest in having a voice within their community
- Coupled with a desire to play a positive role in their community while expanding their own knowledge base.

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Concerns were expressed regarding barriers to participation:

- Balance of home and private life with the pressures and long working hours of Council
- Perception of gender tension and questions of whether real change could be affected also played a role

However, despite these reservations, none of the barriers were viewed as insurmountable

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Past Experience of Respondents

Mayors and Councillors often come to their positions with diverse business backgrounds— usually entering politics after having work extensively in the public and/or private sphere.

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Support for Mentorship Program

- 16 Of 23 survey respondents commented in favour of mentorship
- Level of time commitment would be a crucial factor

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Education Sessions

Interest was strong and various suggestions were presented

Potential course subjects:

- Internal functioning of administration and the external relationships with both developers and other levels of government
- How to better provide leadership on key issues individual members wished to explore



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Potential course subjects cont'd:

- Balancing Home and Work life
- Creating education session that might help those not involved in politics become interested
- Helping young girls to become aware of municipal affairs and the role they could play
- Dispersing myths and uncertainties



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Personal Involvement in Politics

Respondents were asked to provide their own reasons for taking part in municipal politics

- Desire to include their own experiences, knowledge and perspectives in the decision-making process were of fundamental importance
- Deep-seated commitment to their municipality and participating as a municipal official – helping to contribute to a healthier and better community

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Barriers and Challenges

Respondents were asked to comment on perceived barriers to political participation

- Fear of criticism and dealing with the pressures of the position
- General lack of knowledge within the community of the role such positions play
- Costs of running and serving

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